

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger delivered a speech today criticizing the decision by House Democrats to eliminate the extension of the Secure Rural Schools program from a tax bill today. Herger has strongly supported a bill including a full reauthorization of SRS and the Payment in lieu of Taxes programs. That bill recently passed the Senate 93-2:

**“I rise in strong opposition to this phony tax extender bill. After months of negotiations, the Senate finally reached an agreement on extending critical tax relief for individuals, businesses, and energy security. The Senate passed that agreement three days ago by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 93-2. With Congress preparing to adjourn, time is of the essence. And yet here we are, back at square one, considering a proposal that the Senate has already rejected on four separate occasions.**

**“I am especially disappointed that the legislation before us drops a provision to extend the secure rural schools program through 2011. This program is vital to small counties, in my district and across the West. The counties in the district I represent depend on these payments to provide the most basic services like education for their kids. I'd ask unanimous consent to insert in the record a letter from the National Education Association emphasizing the importance of including Secure Rural Schools in this legislation. Several of us from the West have been working all year to get this program reauthorized, and we finally got a 93-2 vote in the Senate for a bill that would get it done. But now we've blown up a good bill, and rural counties are getting lost in the shuffle.**

**“I understand that some of my friends on the other side feel that the Senate bill doesn't raise taxes enough. And frankly, there's some things in the Senate bill I don't like either. It's a compromise. But taking this approach virtually guarantees that we won't get this tax relief done at all. No more R&D credit. No more tax relief for higher education expenses. No more incentives for renewable energy production. I urge a resounding "NO" vote on this futile exercise, and I urge this House to pass the Senate's bipartisan compromise and get this done.”**